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A STORY OF NANCY HANKS



“GOOD-BYE! GODSPEED!” (page 33)

A Story of Nancy Hanks

By

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TO MY SISTER
IRENE
WHO WAS NAMED FOR HER
GRANDMOTHER HANKS

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A Story of Nancy Hanks



CHAPTER I

LITTLE BROWN NANCY

“NANCY! Nancy Hanks!”

Under a huge forest tree that stood near the edge of a little clearing in the Virginia backwoods, more than a hundred years ago, there sat a little girl. She was exploring with busy fingers the gnarled roots of the tree, over a hole in which there lay a smooth, flat stone. The stone seemed to serve as a rude cupboard door, for, pushing it aside, the little girl pulled from the hole a number of treasures which she proceeded to array neatly before her in a row.

“Here is my boat that Joe whittled for me,” murmured the little girl, fondly eyeing the Indian canoe, no larger than her hand, that so lightly rode the waters of the near-by “branch,” as this little girl called the swift,

brown stream flowing merrily on its way not a stone's throw from where she was now sitting. "And here is my little bow and arrow, and the colored feathers the boys have brought me from the woods, and my pumpkin-seed necklace. And, oh, here is Jemimy, my dear Jemimy, not hurt one bit in all that rain last night."

And the little girl tenderly lifted from her leafy bed in the hollow a small doll, carved but roughly, it is true, from a block of wood, but tastefully dressed in a bright blue homespun gown.

"My dear Jemimy, sit up here," went on the little girl, affectionately twitching the blue gown into place, "and listen to what I have to say to you. It is a secret between you and me. There is something going on at home, Jemimy, and they won't tell me what it is. Even Mother says, 'Run away, Nancy,' when I ask her about it. But I know that something is going to happen, for Mother and the girls are sewing hunting-shirts and shoepacks, and Father and the boys are away all day, and when they are home they talk,

talk, talk, before the fire until late at night. Every time I wake they are still talking, but so low I can't hear what they say. And me —, Jemimy, they keep me running to the spring for water from —”

“Nancy! Oh, Nancy Hanks!”

“There now, Jemimy, what did I tell you?” exclaimed Nancy, with a shake of the head. “I expect they want more water now. Mother has deerskin a-soak for shoepacks, and it does seem to me she wants a powerful sight of water just for them. No, I don't hear her, not yet. I've been twice to the spring this morning, and I'll be all wore out and slimsy if I keep a-running so. I'll hear her the next time she calls, but first I'll finish telling you about the doings up at the house.”

She was a brown little girl, was Nancy Hanks, as she sat under the great forest trees that fine summer morning, brown from the crown of her head, covered with soft dark curls, to the tips of her bare brown toes that she snuggled so comfortably into the cool green moss. Nut-brown, too, her face and hands, though her cheeks glowed rosily through

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the deep coat of tan. Even her little gown was dyed a rich butternut brown. But her eyes were blue, a soft gray-blue, that matched the faded sunbonnet now pushed carelessly back and hanging round her neck by the string. She was only five years old, but as alert and knowing as any of the bright-eyed little wood creatures by which she was surrounded and whose haunts and ways she knew well, as befitted the daughter of a backwoods pioneer.

“Nancy! Nancy Hanks!”

The voice was so near that Nancy had no more than jumped to her feet when the thick undergrowth was parted and her older sister Polly stepped into the grove. Polly was a slim, pretty girl, perhaps fourteen years old. She, too, was dressed in a butternut homespun gown, and her fair hair was twisted tightly in a knot at the top of her head and fastened by a long locust thorn. Polly was proud and very conscious of this “grown-up” knot. She felt of it constantly, for until a week ago she had worn her hair in a thick braid down her back. Now she eyed her little sister reproachfully as she said:

“Why, Nancy, didn’t you hear Mother calling? She wants you up at the house right away.”

“What for, Polly?” inquired Nancy, as she hastily bundled her treasures back into the hole. “Is she going to tell me the secret, or is it only for more water from the spring?”

Polly laughed as she tenderly patted her hair and wove in more firmly the sharp locust thorn.

“Ask Mother,” was her answer.

And Nancy, taking her at her word, darted ahead and across the clearing in the center of which stood the Hanks homestead, the house in which Nancy herself had been born.

It was a log cabin, a story and a half high, rude, chinked with mud, its tall stone chimney built outside the house, and its door fashioned of a great slab made from a forest tree. Behind the cabin lay a patch of Indian corn, among whose gently waving plumes the stumps of huge trees showed black against the green. At one side of the house lay a truck garden, with its neat rows of beans and cabbages, melons and squashes.

"Oh, Mother," called out Nancy, as she stumbled over the doorstep into the one big room that made up the ground floor of the cabin, "oh, Mother, are you going to tell me the secret now? Do tell me, and I won't whisper it to a soul, not even to Jemimy. Is that why you sent for me, Mother, to tell me the secret?"

Mrs. Hanks smiled down at eager little Nancy and slowly nodded her head.

"I suppose I did," said she at last, in her comfortable, motherly voice, "for I will tell you now about 'the secret,' as you call it, Nancy. But what I really wanted you for was to fit you out with a new pair of moccasins."

"New moccasins for me, in the summer-time?" And Nancy gazed down in astonishment at her little bare feet that usually knew no covering until nipping frost was in the air.

"Yes," replied her mother, seating herself on the doorstep with Nancy at her side, "new moccasins for you to travel in. For we are going away, Nancy. That is 'the secret.' We are all going to leave Virginia and travel

far over the mountains, over the Wilderness Road, into Kentucky, where we will make a new home and live."

"Going away?" cried Nancy, her eyes dancing and her cheeks aglow. "Going away from home on a journey? Will I ride on horseback, Mother, and sleep out under the stars, the way the boys do on their hunting trips? Will I, Mother?"

Her mother nodded absently, her hand smoothing down Nancy's brown curls. She was gazing before her as if she saw stretching in the distance the long and dangerous road they were so soon to traverse. But the little girl moved her head impatiently under the caressing hand, and Mrs. Hanks took up the thread of her story again.

"Yes," she said presently, "'twas decided upon last night that we should go, at a meeting of all the men-folk at your Grandfather Shipley's, and to-day your father and the boys have gone to consult with your Uncle Abraham Hanks. He is to act as our guide, since he himself went over the Wilderness Trail some dozen years ago."

"Why do we go, Mother?" asked Nancy, after a moment's pause. How strange it would be, she thought, to go away from home, the only home she had ever known, and perhaps never, never come back to it again. Other people might move away, strangers might settle among them, but that a change should come into Nancy's own life she had never even dreamed. "Why do we all go to Kentucky, Mother? Why don't we stay here in Amelia County?"

Her mother looked at her for a long moment without speaking. It may be that she had asked herself that very question more than once as she thought of leaving the safety and peace of their Virginia home for the perilous journey over the Wilderness Road into the almost unbroken wilds of Kentucky — Kentucky, that had so terribly earned the name of "the dark and bloody ground." But she was a brave pioneer woman, and there was no trace of complaint or fear in her voice as she answered:

"Because your father thinks it best, Nancy. Kentucky is a beautiful, fertile land, and

offers a great opportunity for settlers there. There is more game in Kentucky. You have heard your Uncle Abraham tell of the great herds of buffaloes, more than a man can count, that gather at the salt licks. And there is more room to spread out, too. It is becoming crowded here in Virginia, the men-folk think, and they are all eager to go."

"Is every one going?" queried Nancy, beginning to feel more and more excited at the prospect of the journey. "Will Grandmother and Aunt Lucy Berry and Cousin Sarah Mitchell go?"

Fully one half of the little settlement in which Nancy lived was composed of her own relatives — her aunts, uncles, cousins, and her mother's parents, Grandfather and Grandmother Shipley, who had come from England many years ago.

Nancy's mother shook her head.

"Not all the family," said she. "Still, we shall be a large party, though made up of our kinsfolk alone. In our own family there will be ten of us: your father and I, the boys, Tom and Joshua, William and Charles and Joe,

your sisters Polly and Betsy, and you. Then Grandfather and Grandmother Shipley go, and your Uncle Richard Berry and Aunt Lucy, with Frank and Ned; Uncle Tom Sparrow and Aunt Elizabeth with little Nancy Sparrow; and Uncle Abraham Hanks with his wife and children. There will be more than twenty-five souls in the party, full enough for safety, and at least eight rifles, not counting the help we women could give in case of need."

Nancy understood only too well what her mother meant by "in case of need."

"Injuns!" she breathed softly. "Mother, will we meet the Injuns?"

Mrs. Hanks rose briskly to her feet.

"'Tisn't likely we shall even catch sight of a redskin," said she stoutly. "Folks do tell of going over the Trail nowadays and never glimpsing one. Now you cut along down to the spring, Nancy, and fetch me up a pail of water. I must get to work on your moccasins or you will be going barefoot over the Trail."

"Oh, Mother, fringe them for me, will you?" begged Nancy, as she caught up a bucket from

the watershelf. "Fringe them like the boys' leggings, do! I ought to have the best kind of moccasins to wear into Kentucky."

And as she ran, swinging her bucket, down the path to the spring she called back:

"Fringe them for me, Mother, do! Fringe them!"

CHAPTER II

THE SWEET-GRASS RINGS

NANCY hurried up from the spring, generously splashing the water from her brimming bucket as she came.

"Mother," she called out before well inside the cabin door, "Mother, you didn't say Cousin Sarah Mitchell's name when you told me who was going to Kentucky. Isn't she going? Aren't Uncle Robert and Aunt Sarah going with us, too? Oh, I don't want to go if Sarah stays behind."

Sarah Mitchell was Nancy's favorite cousin. The little girls were constant playmates, and gentle, placid Sarah and active, venturesome Nancy loved one another all the more dearly, perhaps, because they were so unlike in disposition.

Nancy's bright face clouded over at the news that Sarah was to remain in Virginia. She looked so downcast that her mother, after hesitating a moment, spoke out.

"Hark ye, Nancy, to what I say," said she. "This is not to be talked about, but I know you will keep silence if I bid you. The reason the Mitchells do not go with us to Kentucky is because your Uncle Robert Mitchell has had a dream."

Nancy nodded understandingly. All the family knew that Uncle Robert was subject to dreams and visions and that he ruled his life according to their leading. She knew, too, that the men-folk were sometimes impatient with Uncle Robert because of his dreams, but, as for her, she dearly loved to hear them. She leaned forward now with wide eyes and parted lips, eager to hear the tale.

"'Twas three nights ago," began Mrs. Hanks impressively, "that your Uncle Robert had the dream. Up to that moment he was as eager as the rest of the men to go to Kentucky. But I declare when I heard him tell it, right here in this kitchen, I couldn't find it in my heart to blame him for deciding not to go.

"He dreamed that he stood before a huge gateway that looked for all the world like Cumberland Gap, that we must pass through,

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Nancy, on our way into Kentucky, and it looked just the way your Uncle Abraham has told us all so many times. It was a long and narrow opening, with great white walls that towered up and up until they lost themselves in the sky. The gateway was closed by heavy black bars, and behind the bars the sky flamed red, a sunset red, as if the whole world were on fire. He said he could think of nothing but Indian massacres and burnings waiting for him there on 'the dark and bloody ground' of Kentucky. Before the bars there stood a monstrous figure, wrapped from head to foot in a long black cloak. It stood with arms outstretched like the arms of a cross to bar the way."

There was silence for a moment, and then Mrs. Hanks shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, the upshot is," she went on, "he won't go. He takes it as a leading to stay away from Kentucky. But your father and the rest of the men — lawsee! mad as hornets at him, every one."

"Was the figure an Angel, Mother, like an Angel in the Bible?" whispered Nancy, her eyes round and full of awe.

"Your Uncle Robert thinks so," answered her mother softly.

Nancy slipped her hand into her mother's and held it tightly, while the soft wind ruffled the grass before the cabin door and made the tops of the tall trees bend and bow. A saucy chipmunk whisked down the trunk of one tree and up another. A little bird whistled low near by. It was peace, it was safety, it was home, and a great wave of homesickness swept over Nancy and left her with a lump in her throat.

Perhaps her mother read something of this in the little girl's face, for she patted Nancy's hand and said cheerfully:

"Come, now, Nancy, let me fit your new moccasins. You fetch the deerskin from over yonder and I will blaze up a good fire so they won't take long to dry. I will fringe them all round for you, too, and if I have time, perhaps I can dye the fringe red, if you like."

Mrs. Hanks spread two pieces of wet deerskin, which Nancy soberly carried to her, flat upon the floor, and as the little girl placed a foot on each piece her mother carefully drew

the deerskin up and tied it snugly about her ankles. Then she lifted Nancy to a seat before the fire where she would sit until the moccasins dried in the shape of her feet. Later, her mother would sew them up the back, and, as a special bit of decoration, fringe them round the top.

Nancy mustered up a faint smile as she thought of the fringe, perhaps a bright red fringe, too. Sometimes her mother and the girls dyed the fringe of the boys' hunting-jackets and leggings a bright green or red or yellow with the juices of berries and leaves, but never before had she had anything so gay. But as she sat watching the tall yellow flames, with her heavy wet feet extended toward the blaze, the smile died away and Nancy's face took on a most doleful expression.

Sarah was not going to Kentucky! What fun they might have had together on the journey, running along the road, picking berries, sleeping side by side rolled in one blanket! They would not have been a bit of trouble to any one, good as gold all day long. Oh, dear, oh, dear, why had Uncle Robert ever had such a dream?

"Mother," queried Nancy, with a little quiver in her voice, "what shall I do all day long on the journey with no one to play with me, now that Cousin Sarah isn't going?"

"Do?" said her mother, looking up from her work, "do? Why, you will be busy all day long, I expect. You are going to ride in a big basket fastened on the side of my horse, and I warrant you will be peering here, there, and everywhere from the moment we start. When you want to stretch your legs, perhaps Polly and Betsy will let you help them drive the cows along the trace. At night, when we make camp, you can help Aunt Lucy Berry by playing with Baby Ned and keeping him good-natured. Oh, there will be plenty for all of us to do before ever we reach the stockade we are bound for in Kentucky."

Nancy felt better. Perhaps she might enjoy the journey a little, after all. It would be pleasant to drive the cows with Polly and Betsy and all the big boys and girls as if she were as old as they. Poor Sarah, left behind! Nancy would give her all her colored feathers, perhaps her little bow and arrow — some-

thing that Sarah could keep always so that she would never, never forget her Cousin Nancy far away.

Nancy thought hard for a moment. Then her curls began to bob, her hands to fly about, and her feet to twitch in her excitement until her mother called out:

“Careful, Nancy, careful! Don’t stretch those moccasins. A big girl like you ought to know how to sit still.”

“I do, Mother, I do,” answered Nancy happily. “I didn’t move my feet a mite, or, if I did, ’twas only the tiniest mite you ever knew. But I’ve just thought of the nicest thing. I’ve thought what to give Sarah for a present when I go away, a present that she can keep always and never, never forget me as long as we both live. It’s a ring, a sweet-grass ring. Won’t that be nice, Mother?”

“I reckon it will, Nancy,” answered her mother, pleased at the thought of an occupation that would keep the restless little girl quiet and absorbed until the new moccasins were dry. “Where is your sweet-grass, and I will fetch it for you.”

"On the high shelf," replied Nancy, pointing to the shelf where Mrs. Hanks kept her few cooking utensils; "in the maple bowl, on the end. Joe hid it there for me. I asked him to, for fear Betsy would want it for the chain she is making."

Mrs. Hanks handed down the sweet-grass, and the little girl fell to work without delay.

Presently she looked up to say, "There are going to be two rings, one for Sarah, one for me, and so long as we wear them we will always be good friends."

She worked busily as the sun mounted in the sky, neatly and surely braiding the pale green scented strands. At last she finished her task, and slipping the rings upon her slim, brown fingers she held them up for her mother to see.

"Come see them, Mother; beautiful, aren't they?" she murmured, admiring them with her head on one side, as her mother bent over her and felt of the deerskin. "Are my moccasins dry? Oh, I am so glad. My feet were just getting full of prickles. Now I can run over to Sarah's, can't I, and give her the ring?"

Mrs. Hanks, as she straightened herself

with the dry moccasins in her hand, glanced out of the open cabin door.

"No need of that," said she; "here comes Sarah now."

Nancy, hopping up and down on the doorstep, watched her Cousin Sarah run toward her as fast as her stout little legs would allow.

Sarah was a fair, plump little girl, with straight, brown hair brushed smoothly back from her placid brow, and gentle, brown eyes that gazed out confidingly upon her small world. Now her round face was flushed crimson, and at sight of Nancy her short arms beckoned and whirled like the fans of a wind-mill in a gale.

Nancy ran out to meet her and threw both arms about her cousin's neck.

"Oh, Sarah," she exclaimed, "see what I have made! A present for each of us! A sweet-grass ring apiece to put on and never take off, so that when I am in Kentucky and you are left home here we will never forget one another, but will love each other as long as we both live."

She slipped one of the rings upon her cousin's finger and demanded:

"Aren't they beautiful? Look at mine. Will you promise never, never to forget me, Sarah? Isn't it the most beautiful ring you ever saw?"

"Beautiful," gasped Sarah, still breathless, "beautiful! But that is why I am here now. Mother sent me. I am to tell your mother — we *are* going to Kentucky with you, after all."

"You are?" cried Nancy, "you are going?" And she set off for the cabin calling out, "Mother, Sarah's going to Kentucky! Mother, come quick, Sarah's going to Kentucky with us!"

Mrs. Hanks appeared in the doorway and calmly surveyed the two excited little girls.

"Nancy, be quiet. Sarah, what's all this? Cool off a moment before you try to tell. Nancy, let your cousin alone till I hear what all this to-do is about."

"We are going to Kentucky with you-all, Aunt Nancy," began Sarah, smiling up into her aunt's face. "Mother sent me over to tell you. Father has had another dream. 'Twas an Angel again, but a different one this time, a beautiful white Angel with a glistening

dress and great white wings like a dove. And she beckoned Father to come, in the dream, to come into Kentucky he says she means, and so he is going."

"Is that all the message your mother sent?" inquired Mrs. Hanks. She was wondering whether, in the ten days before the journey into Kentucky began, Uncle Robert might not have as many different dreams. And she had small doubt what would happen if the last angelic visitor said, "Stay!"

"Yes," replied Sarah promptly, "she did. She told me to tell you that she was beginning to make ready, and that Father has gone this morning to see a man who wants to buy our land."

"Then you really are going, I believe," said Mrs. Hanks in a tone of relief, "and as soon as your father sells the land I shall feel sure of it. It is good news to me to hear that you are going with us, after all. Mind you tell your mother, Sarah, that I will be over sometime to-day to see her. Perhaps she will want Polly or Betsy to help her make ready, she is so behind now."

"She is sewing bags this morning to put seed in, to take with us," volunteered Sarah, "and I am to go straight back home, she said, to help her. I am to hold the sacks when she pours in the seed."

"I am glad we have the rings to wear," whispered Nancy, as her cousin turned to go. "We will always wear them and never take them off. Will you, Sarah? I will, if you will."

"Always," said Sarah, fervently, in reply. "We will wear them always so that we will never forget one another and always be good friends."

CHAPTER III

OFF FOR KENTUCKY

It was early in the morning, ten days later, before the sun was fairly up, that a little band of travelers made ready to start on their long journey over the blue mountains of Virginia into the wilderness of Kentucky.

The meeting-place was before Grandfather Shipley's cabin, and there they assembled, family by family, their neighbors flocking about them to wish them Godspeed.

Nancy, clinging tightly to her mother's hand, was among the first arrivals, and a quaint little figure she made as she stood hopping from one foot to the other in her excitement at the stirring scene before her. She wore her best linsey-woolsey frock, with a little yellow cape pinned snugly under her chin. The cherished new moccasins, gay in their profusion of bright red fringe, adorned her feet. On her head was perched a little coonskin cap, with its pretty striped tail

hanging down behind, bobbing and twitching with every move of Nancy's restless head. Nancy prized her cap even more than she did her new moccasins. Had not her brother Joe on his last hunting trip taken pains to bring home to her the finest coonskin he could find, so that she might have a cap that the most skillful hunter would be proud to wear?

As she stood looking about her, the noise and confusion and shouting seemed to increase. The leaders were making ready to start, and the long line began to swing slowly into place. Nancy saw her mother mount her gray mare Bonny, who stood with patiently twitching ears and tail, and who rolled a mildly inquiring eye down at Nancy as she stood on tiptoe and gave her nose a little friendly pat. Then, trembling with excitement, she was lifted by her father into a large basket securely fastened to her mother's saddle.

"Sit still, Nancy. Don't squirm any more than you can help," said he, and hurried off to his task of driving the cattle into their place in the line.

Peeping over the edge of the basket, Nancy sat quiet, scanning with interest the figures that moved about obedient to the orders shouted by the older men of the party. How gay the men looked in their hunting-coats of green, with leather leggings trimmed with fringes of scarlet, yellow, or green! Nancy's own brothers wore shirts of dressed deerskin, yellow as gold, with richly contrasting fringes dyed crimson with bloodroot. There were many coonskin caps like Nancy's, while others wore slouch hats stuck round the crown with bucks' tails. Women and children were dressed in their substantial best, for little luggage could be carried with them, and the children openly rejoiced in their holiday attire, thinking it quite befitted such a gala occasion.

Twisting cautiously about, Nancy spied Sarah Mitchell just behind her, seated in a basket like her own, fastened at the side of her mother's horse.

"Sarah, Sarah," she called, "did you wear it? See mine! I have mine on. Where is yours?"

In reply Sarah waved her hand, displaying

her sweet-grass ring to Nancy's great pleasure, and kind, placid Aunt Sarah sent her a gentle smile.

"Look at Nancy Sparrow," called Nancy again, bobbing up and down in her basket. "Nancy! Nancy Sparrow! I'm here! See me! I'm here!"

Yes, still farther back in the line was little Cousin Nancy Sparrow, wriggling and twisting about in her mother's arms, her curly black head never still a minute. Aunt Elizabeth Sparrow, perhaps rightly enough, would not trust her little daughter to the safety of a basket. She meant to hold her in her arms all the way, she said with a nervous clutch.

There sat Aunt Lucy Berry on her horse, holding Baby Ned. Aunt Lucy was plump and good-natured. She was jogging the baby up and down to keep him quiet, and shaking his rattle until he laughed merrily and waved his stubby arms.

"Where is Frank Berry?" exclaimed Nancy aloud, with such a bounce and twist that old Bonny looked round in surprise. "There, I see him up in front, and Grandmother Shipley

is helping him out of his basket. He must be going to ride beside Grandmother. Do they mean to let Frank walk? He is not much older than I am. Maybe two months, maybe three — oh, well, maybe a whole year older.”

But Nancy soon comforted herself with the thought that before long she would begin to coax to be set down, too.

“But I won’t speak about it just now,” she mused, “for I can see better what is going on from where I am than Frank Berry can on the ground.”

Before and behind the women who, with the children, were placed in the center of the line for safety, came the cattle driven by the half-grown boys and girls, who flourished their long switches with an important air. There were Polly and Betsy. How pretty they looked, laughing and joking with every one who came near! Polly had forgotten, for the moment, her precious knob of hair, well hidden under the deep cape of her new sunbonnet, and the cheeks of both girls were flushed scarlet with excitement.

Now Nancy’s brother Joe came running

along the line. Under each arm he carried a bag. His face was red and his mouth puckered as if he were trying to whistle, but no sound came from his lips. When he caught sight of his mother, he hurried toward her, and throwing the bags on the ground he began to tell her something, now and then thumping the bags at his feet as he talked.

Nancy, bright-eyed, leaned forward over the edge of her basket. She did not mean to miss one word. What did ail Joe? What could be in those knobby bags?

"It is old Aunt Dilsy," began Joe impatiently, but in a low voice. "What do you think she has done now? Got up in the moonlight last night and went out under that old sour apple tree in Grandfather's back pasture land, and picked up two bagfuls of green apples for us to carry with us to eat on the way. They are as hard as bullets and green as grass. Does she want to kill us all?"

"I will eat them, Joe," cried Nancy, beginning to feel hungry at the mention of apples. "They won't hurt me. I will eat them for you."

But no one paid any attention to her gen-

erous offer. Joe was still talking, and Mrs. Hanks had begun to shake and laugh.

"There wasn't another one of the boys would take the apples from her," continued Joe, "and there she stood looking so old and feeble, and thinking she was giving us such a treat. Sour apples! What shall I do with them, Mother? Heave 'em into the ditch?"

Mrs. Hanks could not help laughing again as she looked from Joe's wrathful face to the bags of sour apples at his feet, but she shook her head at his suggestion to throw them into the ditch.

"Poor Aunt Dilsy," said she soothingly, "poor old soul! She is almost ninety years old, they say. I am glad you were kind to her, Joe, and took her present. You were more of a man than the other boys, and now she need never know that we are not grateful for her sour apples."

"I wish it had been a little cat, instead of apples," broke in Nancy. "Aunt Dilsy promised me one to carry with me, but I reckon we both forgot it. I know I did."

"A cat!" said Joe scornfully. "Isn't that

just like a girl to want to load up with a cat and green apples when we are starting out on a long journey? But what shall I do with them, Mother? They are as heavy as lead."

"Here, put them under Nancy," was his mother's inspiration. "Don't you dare set your teeth in one of them, Nancy Hanks. We would be in a fine flustration if you had colic the first day out. We will get rid of them, Joe, when we are out of Aunt Dilsy's sight. Stand up, Nancy. There, now, they will raise you up so you can see all roundabout."

Nancy was most accommodating. She perched herself on top of the hard, lumpy bags and watched the approach of the horses led carefully along, bearing the pack-saddles made of well-chosen forked boughs. Nancy knew that the horses carried bags of meal — had she not been promised journey-cake baked on a hot stone? — packages of seed for planting in the new land, simple farm tools and household utensils, blankets, perhaps, and a precious feather bed or two.

In the front and rear of the party walked the men and older lads, rifles in hand, with

powder-horn and bullet-pouch within instant reach, and tomahawk and hunting-knife stuck in their belts.

On the outskirts, before and behind, were the scouts, who knew well the necessity of keeping every sense alert for the danger that might lurk in the most innocent-seeming bit of woodland.

Now Uncle Abraham Hanks, the chosen leader, has taken his place at the head of the line. The last good-byes are said, the command to start is given, and slowly, very slowly, the line moves forward along the rough road.

The eyes of the neighbors left behind in the little settlement are grave, as they watch the start, though their lips call a cheerful farewell. The tears will roll down the cheeks of the women, and, while they bravely wave their aprons, their eyes are often too dim to see clearly the familiar forms that are slowly passing out of their sight. Each heart whispers, "This may be a last good-bye. We may never see them again," for well they know the danger, the hardship, the uncertainty that lie before the little band.

But no husky note sounds in the farewells that are called once and again and yet again.

“Good-bye! Good-bye! Godspeed!”

Suddenly, far up the line, in a last reply, a little brown figure, in coonskin cap, rises in her basket and waves both hands in farewell.

“Good-bye! Godspeed!” she shrills, and the wind carries it back, faint and clear, “Good-bye! Godspeed!”

Slowly, very slowly, the line mounts the first low hill, and with a last waving of hats and hands it passes out of sight of its old home on the way into Kentucky.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE WAY

"MOTHER, I do think traveling is the nicest thing I ever did," said Nancy that night as her mother rolled her in a blanket and placed her beside Sarah with her back to the camp-fire so that the light might not shine in her eyes and keep her awake. "Don't you like traveling, Mother? Sarah and I do. It's much better than being at home."

All day long Nancy had run beside Polly and Betsy, eating berries by the way or picking flowers which she handed up to her mother or grandmother, who patiently received her offerings, however wilted or scanty they might be. When she was tired, there was the big brown basket, with soft quilt inside, and once she had had a long nap in her mother's comfortable arms. That night for supper Nancy had partaken joyously of wild turkey and hot journey-cake, and now she was being lulled

pleasantly to sleep by the tinkle of the bells on the horses, allowed to wander about and graze at will.

“Don’t you like traveling, Mother?” persisted Nancy sleepily. “Don’t you hope it takes us days and days? Sarah and I are going to pick berries to-morrow for every one, berries and flowers, too.”

In the days that followed, as the little company wound its way over the Blue Ridge and through the gap in the Alleghany Mountains, Nancy saw no reason to change her mind as to the delights of travel. She enjoyed it all. The long day’s march was full of pleasures, and she and Sarah, and sometimes little Nancy Sparrow, trudging along hand in hand over the easiest spots, never tired of chattering to one another about the strange birds, the gay flowers and insects that they passed.

When fording the rough mountain streams she felt no fear. Secure in her perch on Bonny’s back, she looked curiously down at the swift brown water rushing by, while the old horse carefully felt her way along the stream. If they ferried over, as they some-

times did, the broad flat-bottomed boats afforded her such delight that her mother held her close, lest in her enthusiasm she should plunge overboard.

At night, close at her mother's side, she slept soundly, never heeding the ominous cry of the owl nor the melancholy howl of the wolf, that caused the guard round the camp-fire to redouble their watchfulness lest it be the signal of the foe, lurking near. The little girls were really disappointed when once or twice at nightfall they chanced upon a road-house or small hamlet where the women and little children were stowed away in the most comfortable beds and shakedown their hosts could produce.

"But this won't last," said Polly one day as the little girl trotted along at her side. "Wait until we come to the Wilderness Trail. Then the hard climbing will begin. To-morrow we reach the Block House on the Holston River, and there we shall stay until Uncle Abraham sees whether any one means to answer his advertisement to join our party. Then, when we start off again, we strike the

Wilderness Trail, and I warrant you will be glad to do more riding than walking then."

"What is the advertisement, Polly?" inquired Nancy, darting into the roadside ditch for a gay flower and back again. "I haven't heard any one talk about that. What is it?"

"It is a piece in the paper, child," answered Polly importantly, as she patted her hair in place, "in the 'Virginia Gazette.' Uncle Abraham sent it weeks ago, before you were told anything about our going away from home. All the men-folk worked at it, to help Uncle Abraham get it just right, and I heard so much talk about it from the boys that I believe I can say it off by heart."

"Say it, Polly, say it," implored Nancy; "say it for me, do. I want to hear it."

Polly stood still in the road. She held her head high and her back very straight as she recited:

"'A large company from Amelia County will meet at the Holston Block House on the first of July, 1789, in order to start the next day through the Wilderness. As it is very dangerous on account of the Indians, it is

hoped each person will go armed and will not depend upon others to defend him.”

Nancy's face puckered. “Injuns?” she quavered, “Injuns? I'm afeard, Polly. Mother said we wouldn't meet any Injuns on the way.”

“Maybe we won't,” said Polly bravely, “and, if we do, haven't we a father and five brothers to take care of us? Don't you be a-scared, Nancy. We will come through safe and sound, I know.”

The next day, when Uncle Abraham Hanks led his band into the Block House on Holston River, there came forward to meet them a tall, sunburned man, with the black hair and keen dark eyes of the Highland Scot, who fell into animated conversation with the men of the party.

“Who is he, Mother?” whispered Nancy, pulling at her mother's dress and staring round-eyed at the little group of men. “Who is he? What is his name?”

“Hush,” whispered back Mrs. Hanks as Nancy pulled again at her skirt. “He has read your uncle's advertisement in the ‘Ga-

zette' and he is talking of going with us through the Gap. His name is General Adair."

That evening General Adair sat alone in the yard of the Block House. He was fashioning from a few nuts and a handful of twigs a number of small animals who stood upon their stiff little legs in a sturdy if not graceful manner.

Nancy and Sarah, wandering hand in hand about the yard, drew near.

The General worked on as if unconscious of the curious gaze of the little girls, and then, thrusting his knife back in his belt, he divided the animals into two groups and held them out on his broad palms.

"The right handful is for a little girl named Sarah," said he with a lively twinkle in his eye; "that is, if I can find any one named Sarah who has smooth brown hair and a dimple in her chin."

"Me!" exclaimed Sarah, startled out of her shyness. "My name is Sarah, and my hair is brown, and I have a hole in my chin, too."

"Well, to be sure!" exclaimed the General, in surprise, "to be sure! And you wouldn't

think it would be easy to find such a little girl, now, would you? The other handful is for somebody —”

“Named Nancy,” interrupted Nancy, pushing forward and leaning against General Adair’s knee in her excitement.

“Is for somebody,” went on the General calmly, “who has curly hair and a coonskin cap and a smudge of molasses on her left cheek. And, come to think of it, I did hear her father call her Nancy at supper to-night when she was eating her fourth piece of bread swimming round in a sea of molasses.”

Nancy laughed as she rubbed her sticky cheek.

“I had only three pieces of bread at supper to-night,” said she honestly, “but I could have eaten four.”

She and Sarah sat down at the General’s feet to play with their animals, and presently Nancy looked up to ask:

“Are you going through the Gap with us when we start out next week?”

“I expect so,” was General Adair’s answer. “Why?”



“SOMEBODY WHO HAS CURLY HAIR AND A COONSKIN
CAP AND A SMUDGE OF MOLASSES ON HER
LEFT CHEEK”



"I was wondering about the Injuns," hesitated Nancy. The subject had been uppermost in her mind since she had talked with Polly about the advertisement the day before. "Sarah and I don't want to go through the Gap at all. We are afraid the Injuns will catch us."

"We may not see a redskin," said the General reassuringly; "and if we do there are plenty of people to look after you little girls. I wouldn't be afraid, if I were you. I wouldn't think any more about the Indians. Leave that to the grown folks. Now let me tell you about the time my little sister Jeannie in Scotland went with me to the Fair, and what do you think she bought for a fairing?"

"But the grown folks might forget us," persisted Nancy earnestly. "Suppose the Injuns came at night and everybody forgot Sarah and me?"

"You won't be forgotten, I am sure," returned the General with an emphatic nod of his head. "Your mothers will think of you first of all. But this I will promise you. If the Indians do come, I will look out for you and

Sarah. Just keep that in mind. And now it is your bedtime. Here comes some one to fetch you. And you haven't guessed yet what Jeannie's fairing was."

"Tell us, tell us," implored the little girls; "tell us before we go to bed."

"Not I," said the General with a laugh. "You must guess what it was, and tell me in the morning what my sister Jeannie bought for her fairing."

CHAPTER V

CUMBERLAND GAP

THE Wilderness Road lay sodden under a drizzling rain. At best it was but a rough mountain trail, blazed years ago by Daniel Boone, the mighty hunter, but to-day the heavy mud, the clinging sand, and the dripping briars that choked the way made traveling doubly hard.

Nancy, swinging in her basket on Bonny's side, peered out from under the folds of a heavy blanket upon the depressing scene. On either hand the way was shut in by mountains, down whose steep sides had rolled the great boulders over and round which sure-footed Bonny stepped with such precision.

Before them stood Cumberland Mountain, and Nancy's eye traveled from the topmost naked crags to the well-timbered ridges and down to where the grapevines, the plum and wild crab-apple trees stood drenched in the heavy mountain mist. The pink laurel bushes

and shining rhododendron drooped with moisture. The wild mountain birds had sheltered themselves snugly from the wind and the wet. The roar of a swollen waterfall sounded mournfully in the distance. The wind whistled shrilly, its voice rising and falling as the road twisted and turned. They were traveling along the Valley of Indian Creek, drawing nearer every day, every hour, to Cumberland Gap. Pinnacle Mountain rose before them on the left, a high ridge of white rocks, where neither man nor beast might climb.

The scene was one of wild beauty, that no one would deny, but little Nancy, cowering down in her damp nest, felt only awe and a sinking of the heart that she could not have put into words if she had tried.

Bonny started violently, and Nancy's basket jolted roughly up and down. What was it? She peered out and then drew back with a shudder. She had spied a heap of bones bleached white and long since picked clean by the wolves, not the first such heap by any means that they had passed on the way.

"Maybe it was a little girl like me that the

beasts caught," she thought, and pulling the blanket over her head Nancy cowered low in her basket and trembled.

Every night did they not hear the scream of the wildcat, the howl of the wolf? Bear tracks in the mud were no rarity. The woods were full of savage creatures that at night were kept at bay only by the blaze of the camp-fire.

Nancy lifted a corner of her blanket and peered up at her mother. Mrs. Hanks sat her horse wearily, her face white and drawn with pain. Nancy knew that her mother was suffering from a toothache. No, she would not bother her now with questions or complaints, but would sit still in her basket, though her little back ached and her legs were stiff and cramped.

Suddenly Nancy's blanket was gently pulled aside and the cheerful face of General Adair smiled into hers. He held out his arms and Nancy joyfully scrambled from her basket into them.

Dear General Adair! How kind he had been to all the children since the day he had joined their party, full of drollery and good-humor

on the darkest days, raising drooping spirits and quickening weary steps by his merry looks and gay words! The leaders of the party trusted and relied upon him, too. The most skillful of scouts he proved to be, a daring horseman as well — he and his roan mare, Jessy, hesitating at no mountain trail, however steep and wild — and he had quickly won his post of responsibility at the very head of the line beside Uncle Abraham Hanks. But Nancy and Sarah felt that their claim upon him came first. Had he not promised to watch specially over their safety? He was their very dearest friend, and now Nancy threw both arms about his neck and gave him a mighty hug, her slim little arms trying to express the love for him that filled her heart.

“Shall I carry you in my arms or will you run beside me for a bit?” asked the General, affectionately rubbing his cold nose up and down Nancy’s cheek. “Your friend Sarah is having a nap in her mother’s lap I noticed as I came by.”

“I’ll run,” said Nancy; “my feet are full of pins.”

But before she was set down on the ground, General Adair saw her cast a quick look backward at the bleached pile of bones.

"Did see yon pile of bones by the roadside?" inquired he, a moment later, as holding fast his big hand she trotted beside him, glad of a chance to stretch her legs and swing her arms again.

Nancy nodded soberly.

"Would you know whose bones they were?" he asked. "Well, I will tell you. They were the bones of a bear. And would you know why the bear died? He died of bad temper, no less. He was known far and wide for being the crossest bear in the mountains. Never a kind look or word for any of the other animals. If he found a tree full of wild honey, would he share it? Not he. Finally he fell sick with a sore head. Did you ever hear of any one who was as cross as a bear with a sore head?"

"Yes," said Nancy instantly, "I did. Charles said it about Joshua the time he had a whitlow and —"

"Yes, yes," interrupted General Adair hastily. "Well, no doubt the saying came

from this very bear. He became crosser and crosser and crosser until one morning there was an explosion, and when the smoke died away there lay the bones of the bear as you saw them."

"Oh," said Nancy with a deep breath, "all because he was so cross."

"Yes," agreed General Adair, "because he was so cross."

Nancy thought for a moment; then she asked, "Who told you? Did you see it?"

"No, not I," said the General gravely, as he skillfully swung Nancy over a boulder that lay in their way. "A little bird told me. I saw her back here a piece, sitting under a leaf to keep out of the rain, and what she told me is true, for she saw it with her own eyes."

"I wish I could see that little bird," said Nancy, looking up at the General and showing her white teeth in a smile. "Do you know what is the first thing I would ask her? I would ask her what was the fairing you bought your sister Jeannie at the Fair."

General Adair put back his head and laughed — but softly. No one, since nearing

the Gap, where the danger of attack by Indians was the greatest, made any more noise than was needful. Even the voices and steps of the children were subdued. Still, the General laughed merrily, and Nancy laughed, too. The question of the fairing was a joke that had not yet lost its savor with Sarah and Nancy and General Adair. For the General had said that the little girls must guess what the fairing was, and as yet they had had small success.

But this afternoon his heart softened a trifle.

"I will give you a hint, Nancy, and you must be sure to tell Sarah so that you start fair," said he. "'Twas in a little rush basket, the fairing was, and now I will tell you no more."

"A duck!" exclaimed Nancy. "A duck sitting in a basket!"

"Cold," returned the General, "cold as ice. This is the only duck in a basket that I know anything about," he added, as he lifted Nancy into her nest upon Bonny's side and went back to his place at the head of the line.

The next morning, toiling slowly up the path that grew more steep with every mile,

the travelers entered Cumberland Gap. Towering high above them rose the stupendous wall of white rock, that great mass of stone that had looked down impassive and uncaring upon no one knew how many tragedies. This was the spot where timid travelers, dismay in their hearts, turned back, the place where an Indian attack was most to be dreaded and to be expected, too.

But, although their spirits sank in the face of such stern surroundings and with the memory of past happenings in mind, not a member of Nancy Hanks's family wavered for an instant in the firm purpose of carrying out what they had so bravely set themselves to do. Not a murmur of complaint was heard among the women, not a whimper escaped the lips of a child as the men led the little party forward as swiftly as they could cover the ground.

On they pressed, worn in body and fearful in mind, until at evening, as they made camp, Polly slipped over to where Nancy and Sarah, side by side, were munching their supper of jerked meat and dry bread and sat down beside them.

"I have some good news for you," she whispered. "We are nearly half through the journey. I heard Uncle Abraham and Father talking, and they say we have covered about eighty miles of the Trail and have one hundred and twenty miles more to go. But the worst of the journey is over, for there are no more great mountains to climb and we have crossed all the hardest rivers except Rock Castle River. Aren't you glad? Isn't that good news?"

Nancy and Sarah nodded agreement as they smiled up into Polly's pleased face.

"Father thinks it is beautiful here," said Sarah, as they looked off at the hazy blue mountains rising softly above the great wooded valley below. "He says if it wasn't for the Injuns he would like to build a house right here on top of Cumberland Mountain and live."

"I don't want to stay here," said little Nancy decidedly, turning her back on the view. "It's too homesick. It's like being on top of the world. When will we build a fire again, Polly, do you think, and have journey-

cake for supper and talk out loud as we did at home?"

"Before long, I reckon," answered Polly encouragingly. "To-morrow we start down Yellow Creek and cross the ford of the Cumberland River, and push straight on from there to Crab Orchard, where we will stop and rest. Pretty soon, now, you girls will be running round playing with your dolls as jimp as ever you were at home. And won't I be glad when we reach the stockade we are bound for? Driving cattle morning and evening at home wasn't hard, but just you try it all day long, for days and days and days, and then see how you feel about it. Look at my best dress, best all last year, I mean. Rags, the skirt is, catching on briars and brambles. And Betsy is on her third pair of shoepacks. It's lucky Mother brought extra ones with her."

Polly moved away, and Nancy and Sarah squeezed hands.

"Joe is going to make me another Jemimy," whispered Nancy; "he said he would."

"I brought Sukey with me," returned Sarah. "I slipped her in a big bag of Mother's,

full of clothes and things. I hope she is safe. I do want to see her again. Oh, Nancy," said Sarah, little dreaming how far off this longed-for day was to be, "won't you be glad when we can sit down together again and have a good play?"

CHAPTER VI

THE ATTACK

THE camp quieted down early that evening. It had been a hard day. As the journey neared its end, the travelers seemed to feel the responsibility and strain of their position more keenly. Nerves became tightened and petty annoyances loomed large. It had seemed a real calamity, and indeed it was a serious matter, when that afternoon one of the horses, in a spirit of mischief, had overturned his pack-saddle and spilled a bag of meal in the tangles of a briar bush. Now every one was glad to rest and forget his cares in sleep, though his bed was nothing softer than a blanket spread on the ground.

Sarah and Nancy lay side by side, each at her own mother's feet.

"Where is your ring, Sarah?" asked Nancy suddenly.

"Here on my finger," was Sarah's answer.
"Where is yours?"

"Hush, children, hush! Go to sleep," murmured Sarah's mother; but Nancy managed to free her hand from the folds of her blanket and to wave one finger in her cousin's face.

Then she subsided, and soon the little group of wanderers through the Wilderness lay quiet under the first evening stars.

A deep red sunset glow burned itself out in the west. The shadows deepened, the tall trees showed black against the sky. There was no sound but the monotonous argument of the katydids, occasionally broken into by the mournful cry of the whippoorwill.

Every precaution for safety had been taken. The bell-clappers on the horses had not been loosened. The men on guard had no comfortable glow and crackle of a camp-fire to keep them company. Since their entrance to the Gap nothing had been permitted that might betray them to the enemy. Better that a wolf or catamount visit their camp, emboldened by the darkness, than that a curl of smoke tell the red man of their presence and exact whereabouts.

To-night Uncle Richard Berry was in com-

mand of the guard. There was a commotion among the horses, and he stepped down into the little gully where they were huddled together.

"I don't like their actions," he admitted when he returned. "They roll their eyes and sniff as if there was something in the wind."

"Never fear," spoke out Uncle Robert Mitchell reassuringly from the shadow of a tree-trunk. "We shall reach the stockade in safety. I have Heavenly assurance that it will be so."

Richard Berry threw him a contemptuous look through the darkness, but held his peace. This was no time for family disputes.

An owl hooted once, twice, three times on a distant hill.

An answer, near at hand, floated softly back, once, twice, three times.

The men started to their feet, their hearts gripped by a deadly fear.

"Rouse the camp!" ordered Richard Berry, his lips white as he thought of the fate that might befall Aunt Lucy and little Frank and Ned if the men were unable to repulse the attack. "Every man to his post as planned."

But before the men could do more than grasp their rifles there was a stampede among the horses. High above their snortings and stampings sounded the dreaded war-cry of the Indians close at hand, and the next instant the keen eyes of the woodsmen distinguished a half-dozen naked brown bodies peering from behind tree-trunks or darting boldly into the midst of the camp.

Nancy, awakened by the neighing of the horses, started up in a panic of fright.

"Mother! Mother!" she screamed, and felt herself gathered into her mother's arms.

An arrow flew over Nancy's head and fell harmless to the ground as her mother crept under a near-by bush and covered the little girl's head with her shawl.

"Lie still," Mrs. Hanks whispered, trembling. "Don't stir."

Through the folds of the shawl Nancy heard sounds that turned her little heart cold within her. She lay stiff and motionless, scarcely daring to draw her breath.

War-whoops, wild, unnatural sounds, seeming to issue from no human throat, yet never

made by any beast, however fierce and wild! Above these savage cries, peals of laughter — horrible laughter, more awful than wail or groan as it smote upon the still night air! The snapping of twigs, a rustle among the bushes, sometimes near at hand, now farther away! Were they the footsteps of friend or foe? Then came shrieks of fright, women's voices, girls' cries.

"Oh, Polly, Betsy, Sarah! Father, come and save us! Save Mother and me and all of us!" prayed Nancy, cowering low and burying her face in her mother's shoulder.

And through the horror of it all, the sound of rifles, many rifles, cracking and snapping steadily all about her.

Nancy's little mind teemed with dreadful thoughts. Suppose the men were killed or taken prisoners! What would become of Polly and Betsy, her mother, herself, all the women and children? Where was her father now? And General Adair?

"Oh, General Adair, come and save Sarah and me! You promised! Come and save Sarah and me!"



HER MOTHER CREPT UNDER A NEAR-BY BUSH

Nancy's imagination pictured a tomahawk held on high, the swift descent of a glittering scalp-knife, a long brown arm reaching in under the bushes and dragging her and her mother out to meet what horrible fate?

Mrs. Hanks moved slightly to ease her position, and Nancy started and clutched her mother close. Whatever happened, no one should tear her away from her mother's arms. Oh, would this night of horror never end? Would dawn and her father, safe and unharmed, never come?

But at last the firing slackened, and finally stopped. Mrs. Hanks, peering anxiously out into the darkness, not knowing whether the silence boded well or ill, saw, with a throb of relief, a familiar figure bent low as the bushes stepping cautiously in their direction.

She spoke softly. "General Adair, we are here. Oh, what has happened? Where is my husband? And the children, what of them?"

"Safe, Mrs. Hanks, safe, thank God," answered General Adair, helping her to her feet. Nancy clung to his hand, that strong white hand, and thought, shuddering, of the dreaded

brown arm she had feared so lately. "The Indians have been driven off, for the present, at least, and no harm done to any of us. The children are safe and your husband is searching for you now. He is just at my heels. I came to see if Nancy and Sarah were safe. I promised to look out for them, you know."

"Sarah was with her mother, beside this sassafras bush," said Mrs. Hanks, stepping forward. "Why, here is her mother, still lying in her place. She can't be asleep!"

No, Aunt Sarah Mitchell was not asleep. She lay upon her side, a peaceful smile on her lips, and a feathered Indian arrow piercing her gentle heart.

Where was little Sarah?

"Sarah! Sarah Mitchell!" called General Adair, as Mrs. Hanks fell upon her knees beside her sister and Nancy stood trembling by. "Sarah, answer!"

But Sarah did not answer.

General Adair turned to the men who, with the frightened women and children, now came crowding round.

"Sarah Mitchell missing! Little Sarah

missing! Has any one seen her? Did no one catch a glimpse of her? Perhaps she is still hiding somewhere."

The word spread through the camp like forest fire. Men and boys, full of concern for the gentle, smiling little girl, made motherless by this terrible night's work, searched carefully among the bushes and behind tree-trunks, while the women, tears rolling down their cheeks, held their children close.

Poor Uncle Robert Mitchell! He stood staring before him in a daze. His wife killed by the Indians! His little Sarah gone, stolen away, no doubt! But the Angel, the snow-white Angel of his dream! She had bidden him forward. Was her word false? Were his visions not to be trusted, after all? Uncle Robert recalled his first dream, the somber figure barring the way, against a sky of red. Would that he had hearkened to that messenger and obeyed its warning! Against a sky of red? He remembered the crimson sunset glow that had flamed behind the trees that very night, and he dropped his head upon his breast with a groan.

General Adair was in earnest conversation with Abraham Hanks and Nancy's father.

"I fear the Indians have stolen Sarah. See the footprints all about the spot where she and her mother lay? I must go after the child. I promised her that I would see that no harm came to her. I must do all in my power to bring her back."

And General Adair, gripping his rifle close, stepped out into the woods and vanished in the thick darkness.

Nancy clutched her mother's dress and began to cry.

"Sarah, Sarah, they've got Sarah! Oh, oh, they've got Sarah!"

"Hush, hush," said Polly in a low voice, putting both arms about her shaking little sister and holding her close. "General Adair has gone after Sarah. He will bring her back."

But a few moments later, there came a sound that filled them all with fresh horror.

General Adair's voice, unmistakably his, calling. The sound floated out clearly through the night.

"Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!"

"Captured!" cried the men, and the women groaned aloud.

General Adair in the hands of the foe, to be dragged off, perhaps, to nameless tortures and a horrible death! A scout well known as he could hope for small mercy from the savage red man, now disputing bitterly the ownership of every inch of Kentucky soil with the intruding settlers. General Adair, so merry, so light of heart! He had endeared himself to every member of the little band. It was not only Nancy who stood wringing her hands, her heart torn in an agony of love and pity.

Tense they waited, and again came the cry, now farther away:

"Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!"

"He is giving us the direction they are taking him," cried Nancy's father, "down yonder. 'Twas as clear as a bell. Follow me, boys! Quick, the horses! We will save them both yet."

Nancy's father, her brothers Joe and Charles, Uncle Richard Berry, and two sons of Uncle Abraham Hanks mounted their horses and cautiously rode off in the direction the sounds led

them, leaving the other men and boys to guard the camp.

Uncle Robert Mitchell, a bewildered expression on his face, as if he could not comprehend the double calamity that had befallen him, stooped and kissed his wife's cold forehead. Then, with a wild look round, he leaped upon his horse and galloped out into the night.

Nancy, straining forward into the darkness, her little heart pounding and her throat tight, heard the beloved voice for the last time, heard the call once again faint and far away:

“Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!”

CHAPTER VII

IN THE STOCKADE

"Look, Nancy, look!"

"Oh, Joe, what are they?"

Joe Hanks, standing upon a Kentucky bluff, over which the travelers were now winding their way, lifted his sister Nancy high in his arms and pointed to the valley below. There, hundreds upon hundreds of dark, shaggy creatures pushed and shouldered one another about, their swaying heads close to the ground.

"Buffaloes, Nancy," said Joe excitedly, "buffaloes! That is a lick, a salt lick. See the white on the ground? That is salt, dried out from the little salt springs all about. What a chance to get some fresh meat! I wish we hadn't laid in a stock day before yesterday."

"Look at the little baby buffaloes, Joe," exclaimed Nancy, pointing to the outskirts of the constantly moving, shifting mass where a number of buffalo calves were gamboling playfully about. "They are running all round

just as if they were playing. See them skip! Aren't they funny? See them lick the salt, too!"

"There wouldn't be much play about it if you were to get in their way," observed Joe wisely. "They have trampled the ground down as hard as a rock. Can you see those wide places in the grass and cane where they have come through? They call them buffalo streets or lanes, Nancy."

Nancy obediently followed Joe's directing finger, and then, turning her head aside, she put her cheek down upon his shoulder.

"Tell me about the fort, Joe," said she coaxingly, "what you told last night. Tell me again."

With Nancy in his arms, Joe started along the Trail, keeping a watchful eye not only upon a line of laden horses jogging at his side, but upon the surrounding country as well. The danger of attack by Indians was not yet over, nor indeed would it be until they were safe within the fort, if then. And every one, great and small, had been doubly upon the alert since the night a week ago when little

Sarah and General Adair had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

"Tell, Joe," urged Nancy again, patting her brother's cheek; "tell."

Joe stopped long enough to pick a branch of sassafras leaves to be chewed for refreshment, and then began cheerfully: "One more night to sleep in the woods, two more days to march, counting to-day, and then we will see wooden buildings, and a fence around them so high no Injun can climb over and so strong no Injun can break through. That is the stockade. And once inside, with the big doors shut tight and fastened, you need never, never go traveling any more unless you want to go."

Nancy closed her eyes a moment in pleasure at this thought. Then she opened them wide and sat up straight in Joe's arms.

"Joe," said she earnestly, "do you think we will ever find Sarah and General Adair? Do you? Do you think we will ever see them again?"

"Perhaps," returned cautious Joe, waving away a cloud of gnats that swarmed about

Nancy's head, "perhaps we will. There may be some news of them at the fort, Nancy, when we reach there. Sometimes people are held prisoners by the Injuns for months and months and then escape. Yes, I do think we may see them both again."

"But you couldn't find any trace of them that night the Injuns came, when you and Father and the rest rode off to look for them," said Nancy soberly.

Joe shook his head.

"No," said he, "that is so. We tried, but we couldn't find a trace."

It was true their search that night and all the following day had been quite fruitless. And, to add to their sorrow, Uncle Robert Mitchell, riding headlong through the darkness, had been thrown from his horse when fording a swollen stream and had been drowned. Joe shook his head again as he thought of the little Mitchell family completely wiped out in one night, and of the uncertain fate of General Adair. But the remaining travelers, though saddened and now thoroughly weary, had pushed doggedly on, and, as Joe truly said,

were within a two days' march of the stockade at what was later known as Elizabethtown.

"Well, if we do find Sarah," said Nancy thoughtfully, "she is to come and live with us. Mother promised. And she is to have a share of my mother and father because she has no mother and father of her own."

It was toward evening the following day that Abraham Hanks halted his party under the thick trees that marked the edge of the clearing round the stockade for which they were bound. Alone he went forward and spoke for an instant through the cautiously opened gateway. Then he waved his arm, and, as arranged, the line started at high speed, the men, women, and children running, the horses galloping, and the cattle driven at a trot that caused cows and sheep to tumble pell-mell through the wide-open gate which was immediately slammed shut and bolted with great wooden bars. Indians might be lurking about, and were to be given no opportunity to attack the fort at the very moment the gate stood open.

That night Nancy was too tired to enjoy

the hot supper the women of the stockade had prepared for the newcomers, or even to know, when her mother placed her in bed, that she was sleeping for the first time in many weeks with a roof over her head.

But the next morning she was up early, eager to explore every corner of what was to be her home for a whole long year.

Nancy curiously peeped out of the open door of the little cabin in which she had spent the night. Directly beside it stood another cabin, the door of which now opened and, greatly to Nancy's surprise, out popped the little yellow head of her Cousin Frank Berry.

"That your house?" called Frank, laughing at Nancy's look of astonishment. "This is ours, right next door to you. Our back wall is full of bullet holes, but I ain't afeard of the Injuns now. We have a chimney, too, and a hearth in our house."

"So have we," declared Nancy; "and the boys are going to lay a wood floor for Mother, so we won't have to walk on the dirt."

"We had ash-cake for breakfast; plenty of it," contributed Frank. "Mother is going

to cook all kinds of good things now. She promised."

"We are going to have a spinning-wheel," was Nancy's reply, "as soon as Father has time to make it. We are going to live here a long while, Mother said, perhaps a whole year."

"Isn't it funny, all crowded in together?" said Frank, looking round the stockade which was perhaps half an acre long. Indeed, to these backwoods children, used to open spaces and long distances, the stockade did seem a narrow and restricted place. "Let's walk round and see it all."

There were perhaps a dozen cabins one story high, facing in upon the bare, central patch of ground, where men and boys now lounged, laughing and talking together. The children peeped in the cabins as they passed by and saw the figures of women moving about at their household tasks.

"Such a strange way to live," whispered Nancy, "but fun, too. Oh, if only Sarah were here how!"

The backs of these little homes formed part

of the palisade whose great barred gate Nancy noted with approval. How glad she was to be inside, safe, safe from the Indians.

Frank was looking at the four corner cabins, and now he pulled Nancy by the arm.

"I wonder why they are two stories high," he questioned. "Here is Joe, Nancy; let's ask him."

Joe was especially good-natured this morning. The long and perilous trip was over and they had reached a resting-place in the new land.

"Those corner cabins are two stories high because they are used as watch-towers," he explained. "I will take you both up in one some day. You can see all round for miles. And the top story juts out over the lower one so no one can creep up close to the palisade without being seen."

"What is that noise?" asked Nancy, who had been listening to a strange medley of sounds that no one else appeared to notice at all.

Joe laughingly led the way down to one end of the stockade where the cattle had been

fenced off, and were now melodiously bleating and grunting, lowing and squealing together.

"See our black cow over there?" asked he. "And that is our sheep, and that one, too. I drove them in here myself, last night."

"The gate is open," cried Frank Berry. "Look! Look! The big gate is open!"

Nancy gazed in astonishment and some fear, too, at a long line of boys, each carrying an empty bucket, filing rapidly out of a narrow opening at the gate, before which stood three men with loaded rifles in their hands.

"Oh, Joe, what are they doing? I wish they would shut the gate!" cried Nancy in dismay. "Why is it open now?"

"The boys are only going down to the creek for water," answered Joe reassuringly. "Nothing to be afraid of, Nancy. There is a spring for drinking-water inside the fence, but we need more for washing and cooking and for the cattle, I suppose. Don't fret. You won't think anything of it after a bit."

And in time Nancy did become so familiar with the sight that she could, without a qualm

of fear, allow Joe himself to go to the creek with the boys.

Indeed, she even went berrying once with a group of women and girls, well guarded by armed men, and, as they hastily picked the fruit to be preserved for winter use, a cry arose: "The Injuns! The Injuns! Run! Run!" Nancy never forgot how her heart pounded and her little feet flew, as she and Polly, hand in hand, ran for their lives; nor their mingled feelings of relief and wrath as, eyeing their half-filled pails, they learned that the alarm had been a false one. An excited boy had seen the tail feathers of a straying turkey and mistaken them for an Indian hiding in the grass.

As the summer waned, the fear of an Indian attack diminished, and the newcomers who meant to settle in Kentucky now cautiously ventured forth to select sites for their new homes. Nancy's father soon chose the piece of land, a mile or more from the fort, where he meant to build his house, and he and his sons were busy all that autumn clearing the ground of bushes, cutting down the trees, and preparing the ground for building in the spring.

One crisp autumn evening Nancy sat upon the doorstep of their cabin in the stockade watching for her father and the boys to come home from their work at Red Hill, as Mr. Hanks had already named their new home. The great gate swung open, and Nancy started up to see her father enter with a stranger beside him.

“Nancy!” called Mr. Hanks. “Nancy, come here! Where is your mother? Where is every one? General Adair is safe! Safe at Boonesborough!”

All the stockade gathered round to hear the good news brought by this messenger sent from General Adair, himself too weak and ill to venture on the journey.

The capture, the long march, the torture, the final escape — Nancy agonized and rejoiced in turn as the story was repeated to this one and that. Captured by the Indians and forced to march for miles and miles without making camp, then joining a small band of Shawnees, followed by torture, cruel torture, only ended by escape one dark night through the aid of a friendly squaw.

“But Sarah Mitchell? Was there no news of little Sarah Mitchell? Had the General seen no trace nor heard one word of the stolen child?”

The messenger shook his head to all these questionings. General Adair had heard nothing, had seen nothing of Sarah Mitchell. After his escape, weak and exhausted as he was, he had made every effort to find her as he had traveled toward Boonesborough by slow stages, but with no success.

But, said the messenger, smiling to himself in spite of the sober faces all about him, the General had sent something special, to be delivered to a little girl named Nancy — Nancy Hanks. And from his saddle-bag the man took a basket, a little rush basket, and handed it to Nancy who had been pushed forward by her brother Joe.

“The General said,” continued the man, smiling down at bashful, red-cheeked Nancy, “the General said that when I put it in your hands I was to say for him, as if he stood here himself, ‘This is the fairing I bought for my sister Jeannie in Scotland many years ago.’”

With every one crowding round, Nancy opened the little rush basket, and there inside lay a porcupine, a baby porcupine!

Nancy stood speechless, looking down at this strange new pet. So this was the fairing! No wonder she had never guessed it. And now Sarah would never know, Sarah of whom they had no trace.

"It will eat the bugs in the garden, when we have a garden," suggested Polly, as Nancy still did not speak. "Don't you like it, Nancy? I think it's a funny present."

"You can trim your moccasins with its quills," added her mother, smiling down at the pleased face Nancy now raised to hers.

"They are called hedgehogs in Scotland, the General said," explained the kindly messenger. "And it was for a bit of merriment that he sent it, so he told me."

The next day the man rode back to Boonesborough, taking with him Jessy, the General's roan mare, and also a new shirt made of nettle flax, spun and woven by Mrs. Hanks, and sent as a present from Nancy.

In the late spring of the following year, the

house at Red Hill was finished, and thither Nancy traveled, carrying with her, as her most cherished possession, a little fat porcupine in a little rush basket.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GENERAL COMES

"Hi, thar! Wait for me!"

"Wait for nobody."

"You're bigger nor me! 'Tain't fair."

"Fair enough! Go get your mammy to carry you."

Two little boys were running down the road that led from their house to the public highway, freckled, tow-headed little boys, freshly washed and dressed in their best. They were making for the gateway that fronted on the road from the near-by town of Springfield, and having arrived almost abreast each one climbed with the skill of long practice upon his own particular gatepost and sat there, breathless, surveying the world.

"I beat," said the taller boy triumphantly.

"I don't care," answered his little brother jauntily. "It wasn't much of a beat." And both boys fell to pounding their heels on the gateposts in a joyous tattoo.

They were Frank and Ned Berry, Nancy Hanks's cousins, and in the six years that had passed since their journey over the Wilderness Trail into Kentucky they had grown into tall and sturdy lads of twelve and seven years.

Behind them stood their house, Beachland, a large log cabin built by their father during the first year they had spent in Kentucky, and while they were all living for safety and convenience in the fort at Elizabethtown, a few miles away.

Near by were the homes of their fellow travelers, Grandfather Shipley, Uncle Tom Sparrow, Uncle Abraham Hanks.

An hour's ride away at Red Hill was the house built by Uncle Joseph Hanks, Nancy's father, and where Nancy, with her brothers and sisters, had lived until two years ago. Then Uncle Joseph had died and Nancy's mother had soon followed him. The family scattered, and the little girl, nine years old, had come to live with her aunt and uncle at Beachland.

But this August afternoon, as the boys looked out over the countryside from their

point of vantage, they were not thinking of the great migration of white men into Kentucky in which they had had a part, nor of the tribes of Indians who, still fiercely contesting their right to the land, were being slowly and at great cost pushed farther west. They were not looking at their father's well-tilled acres that lay before them, nor at the thriving little hamlet of Springfield, the smoke from whose chimneys they could see rising in the valley below.

They were watching up the road for some one, eagerly watching. Every now and then they would still the drumming of their hard little heels or hush their shrill, tuneless whistling to listen for the beat of horses' hoofs on the dusty road.

"I reckon General Adair is the greatest scout in all Kentucky," volunteered Frank in one of these pauses.

"Pretty near as great as Dan'l Boone himself," answered Ned wisely. "I wish they would come. What time did Father tell he would be back home?"

"Didn't tell. What say the General lets

me hold his gun?" inquired Frank, grinning happily to himself at the idea. "I warrant if he was held upside down by his heels he could shoot the head off a bird sitting on that fence yonder."

This pleasing thought so delighted the boys that they burst into laughter and beat their heels merrily up and down.

"Father says that he knows the way of the woods pretty well himself," said Ned, when their mirth had subsided, "but that he never saw the beat of General Adair. He says the General could see footprints in the dry grass that were more'n a week old. Think of that!"

"Humph!" returned Frank, who did not like to hear his father's prowess belittled, "if he is such a fine scout, how come he didn't find Sarah Mitchell that night when she was stolen away? And he let the Injuns catch him, too. I don't call that being a very fine scout. I could do as well as that myself."

"Oh, you could, you could, Mr. Frank," retorted Ned, finding himself in the strange position of defending Frank's own idol. "Nobody could find Sarah. Didn't our men-folk

search for her everywhere? And she has never been heard of from that day to this. How could General Adair help the Injuns catching him? Maybe they'll catch you some day, for all you're so smart."

"Maybe so and maybe not," was Frank's cool response. "If they do, I'll escape like the General did. Oh, I wish I'd been as big that night as I am now. I would have ridden off after Uncle Robert Mitchell and saved him from drowning in the ford. And I'd have fired a shot or two to make those redskins jump. At any rate, I wasn't a baby screaming in my mammy's arms like you were, Mr. Ned."

But here Ned had the advantage.

"No, so you weren't, Mr. Frank," he returned. "You were a big boy rolled up in your grandmother's petticoat. Had the leg-ache that night, didn't you, and wrapped up in your grandmother's petticoat to keep warm?"

He eyed his brother mockingly, and for once Frank had no retort ready. To his relief he caught sight of his Cousin Nancy a field or so away, and standing on his gatepost he beckoned to her furiously with both arms.

"She's hurrying," he remarked in an amiable voice, settling down again. "She's taking Peidy up to the barn."

Both boys watched the little figure, followed by a small brown cow, move steadily on and disappear round the corner of the house. This had grown to be a familiar sight, the little girl followed by the little brown cow, for to Nancy, by her father's will, had been bequeathed the "heifer yearling called Peidy," and on first coming to live at Beachland the homesick little girl had clung to her pet with an affection which had not diminished and to which the gentle bossy seemed to respond.

"Nancy's all right," said restless Frank, standing again upon the gatepost and flapping his arms in imitation of a rooster.

He uttered a series of crows and then, refreshed, sat down and remarked: "When I heard she was coming to live here I didn't like it much. I thought it wouldn't be any fun to have a girl around. But Nancy can do lots of things just like a boy. She can shoot a bow and arrow, and she can gobble like a turkey and bleat like a fawn so you wouldn't know

the difference. I can, too. Every hunter has to learn that and lots more besides. Father says he means to teach Nancy to shoot a rifle some day. I will teach her myself, if I learn first."

"She isn't a cry-baby like Nancy Sparrow," announced Ned, who sometimes still indulged in the luxury of tears himself. "And she never told on us, did she, the time we got her to hide in the deep hogshead she couldn't climb out of, and then went off all afternoon and forgot her. Here she comes now. Hurry up, Nancy! Hurry up!"

"I am hurrying," called Nancy, running down the road toward them. "Do you see them? Are they coming? Are they in sight?"

Nancy was now a tall, slim little girl, "lanky" the boys called her in cousinly fashion. She stood for a moment smoothing back her brown curls, wind-blown about her face, and fanning her hot cheeks where an excited red spot burned.

"You boys ought to see all the good things to eat up at the house for when all the kinsfolk come to-morrow to see General Adair, and

for to-night, too, I reckon," said she, smiling hospitably at the thought. "Duck and wild turkey and venison, everything good. It's almost like a barbecue."

Ned generously made room for her upon his post, but a moment later she was on the ground again and running down the highway.

"I hear them! I hear them!" she called back. "It's my General, my General Adair!"

Up the road sounded the beat of hoofs, round the turn rode Uncle Richard Berry, and beside him General Adair on his roan horse Jessy.

The little boys stared in open-eyed admiration at the gallant figure before them.

General Adair, graceful, slim, and dark, sat his horse with the ease of one who had spent half his life in the saddle. He wore the woodsman's costume of leggings, breeches, and long loose shirt of gayly fringed deerskin. Moccasins were on his feet, and about his waist was bound a scarlet sash tied behind in a bow. From under his tall cap of fur, trimmed with bands of scarlet raveling, his keen dark eyes looked forth. About his neck hung his powder-horn, ornamented with his own carving. In

his belt were stuck tomahawk, hunting-knife, and shot-pouch, and he carried with him his rifle and knapsack and blanket.

But Nancy noted none of these trappings of war that held her cousins spellbound. She saw, in this gay and dashing figure, this frontiersman of resolute and determined mien, only her friend, her beloved friend, whom she had not seen in six long years, half her little lifetime. She ran toward him with outstretched hands, and he, leaning from his saddle, caught her up to him in his arms.

In the doorway up at the house stood Aunt Lucy, waiting. Little Ned and Frank, running after the horses, halted at the step and looked at one another with wondering faces. Mother was crying! Mother, who never cried!

Yes, Aunt Lucy's eyes were full of tears as she held both the General's hands in hers, tears that rose as she thought of the past and recalled the last time she had heard General Adair's voice, but she smiled cheerily, too, as she bade him enter and gave him a hearty welcome to Beachland.

The house was a spacious log cabin, built

with a great central room, with smaller rooms, and a shed used as a summer kitchen opening from it. The big room was comfortable with its home-made furniture: its great bedstead, split-bottomed chairs, and table made from a slab of wood, supported by four logs, and now laden with some of the good things of which Nancy had reported to the boys. In one corner stood Aunt Lucy's spinning-wheel, in another her loom. From pegs upon the wall hung the clothing of the family, and over the hearth, upon a great pair of buck horns, Uncle Richard kept his rifle ready loaded.

"A fine home you have made for yourselves," said General Adair, looking round with interest; and every one laughed when little Ned, who had been secretly fingering the General's fringes, piped up the boys' proud boast, "It's twice as big as the meeting-house at Springfield."

"And how do you think our girl looks?" asked Uncle Richard, as they seated themselves at the table and he plunged his knife into the great haunch of venison before him. "We call her 'ours' now that she has come to

live with us. Does she look like a good girl, would you say?"

"As tall as a thistle and as bonny as a blue-bell," answered the General, surveying Nancy who sat next him and who now smiled up at him with all her heart in her face.

"I have a cow," confided Nancy, "all my own. Her name is Peidy. You must see her to-morrow. Oh, there is so much to tell! Joe is married; did you know it? He lives at our old home at Red Hill. And Polly and Betsy are married, too. Polly has a baby. She is so pretty, all pink and white like clover, with a dimple in her cheek, and Polly has named her Nanny for Mother and me. And I can read and write. Father taught me."

Nancy's face glowed with pride as she told of this achievement, and it was, indeed, an unusual accomplishment in those days for a backwoods woman to be able to read and write.

"She can read as well as the minister," announced Uncle Richard proudly. "You must read a bit for the General, Nancy, after supper, from your mother's Bible that she carried with her over the Trail from Virginia."

"Oh, that journey from Virginia," said Aunt Lucy with a shake of the head. "At one time I never thought to see you sitting at my table in Kentucky, General Adair. Poor little Sarah! If only we could be *sure* of something about the child's fate."

General Adair looked from face to face round the table as he said slowly, "And what would you say if I told you my real reason for coming here to visit you to-day?"

"Not news of Sarah?" cried Aunt Lucy, while Nancy stood up in her excitement and began to clap her hands.

"I have only a clue," said the General warningly; "only a faint clue. It may not be Sarah at all. But since she was stolen I have had my friends, trappers and the like, on the lookout for an Indian girl who might be a white child, and for the first time I have what may be a clue of Sarah. She would be about twelve years old now, wouldn't she?"

"Eleven," answered Nancy breathlessly; "eleven, same as me."

The General nodded thoughtfully.

"An old trapper friend of mine, who trades

along the Ohio, has sent me word that a band of Shawnees, coming out of the west and making toward one of their villages on the river, has a little girl with them who may be white. And if it is Sarah, she shall be safe home again, please God, before the snow flies."

Nancy had clasped her hands and was murmuring: "It is Sarah. I know it. It is Sarah."

But Uncle Richard Berry was not so confident.

"We must find out in some way whether or not it is Sarah," said he, "before we stir up any trouble among the Shawnees. They like nothing better than a good fight on hand. How had we best go about it, General? Have you any plan?"

"Yes, I have," answered General Adair. "The question is, will you trust me to carry it out?"

"Not alone?"

"No, not alone. With the help of a friend, here at Beachland."

"I would do as much for Sarah as I would for my own child," answered Uncle Richard promptly. "You mean me, I suppose, as the friend."

"No, not you," replied General Adair, to every one's surprise, "not you — Nancy!"

It was four days later that a strange sight might have been seen in the thick woods that bordered one end of Uncle Richard Berry's plantation.

Cautiously picking his way through the undergrowth came an Indian, swarthy, streaked with paint, wrapped in his gay blanket, hand in hand with a little white girl, who from time to time brushed back the soft brown curls that the morning wind persistently blew across her face.

At a certain point the pair halted and the Indian lifted the little girl and held her against his heart. She put both arms about his neck and kissed him. An Indian, think of it, kissed him!

"Good-bye! Godspeed!" whispered the little girl, the only word that was spoken.

The Indian set her upon the ground, untied his roan mare concealed in a thicket, and with a wave of the hand rode off, while the little girl watched him out of sight.

CHAPTER IX

WHITE FAWN

Tom! Tom! Tom! Tom-m-m!

The boom of the Indian drum rolled through the sleeping village.

Tom! Tom! Tom! Tom-m-m!

From out their lodges, in obedience to the summons, stepped the Indian warriors, young and old. In the gray of the early morning, they hastened through the village to a central lodge, that of the medicine-man, who sat upon the ground before his door, solemnly beating upon his drum.

Tom! Tom! Tom! Tom-m-m!

The red men with grave faces settled themselves in a semicircle before the mystery man, and presently were hearkening with deep attention to his words of counsel.

Rain! Rain! How draw the rain? The corn was dying, the stream was low, the choking dust rose thick about them. Day after day had their scouts stood upon the headlands eagerly

scanning the horizon for a cloud, however small, but day after day a scorching sun blazed its way through a clear blue heaven. Prayer after fervent prayer had ascended, but no freshening of the breeze, no welcome roll of thunder, no massing of purple clouds low in the west had brought the promise of relief. Was the Thunder-God angry? Had they displeased the Powers that sent life-giving rain?

The medicine-man shook his head gravely, and in silence gazed into the hard blue dome above as if seeking an answer from the Spirits of the Air. When at last he spoke it was with definite purpose.

“To the mighty Thunder-God, to the kindly God of the Rain, was due honor, highest honor, and all praise. Who more beneficent and powerful than he who sent water to fill their streams, to refresh the earth, to cause their crops to grow and to increase? To-night they would dance, a dance in honor of their God, and make their prayer again for rain. And so every night until an answer was vouchsafed them.”

The medicine-man drew the corner of his

blanket across his face to signify that the interview was ended, and one by one in silence the Indian braves rose and stalked away.

In a lodge at one end of the Shawnee village, upon her bed of pine boughs, there lay a little girl. The first roll of the drum had awakened her, and, as she stirred restlessly and finally raised her head, it was easy to see in the pale little face and the timid, questioning expression of the great brown eyes why she had been given the name White Fawn.

On the other side of the wigwam there lay stretched, fast asleep, an Indian woman, Two Stars, wife of the warrior, Rushing Wind, who had slipped noiselessly from the lodge but a moment ago and with whom the little girl, White Fawn, made her home. The call of the drum, insistent and low, at last awakened the Indian woman, too, and, yawning and stretching, she pulled herself up and sent a smile across the lodge toward her little companion.

White Fawn smiled back at her, as, indeed, why should she not? Who could be more kind to her than Two Stars? Who now loved her

more truly and cared for her more tenderly than this brown Indian squaw? Rushing Wind himself was fond of her in his own undemonstrative fashion. On his way to the powwow that morning he had been careful to step over her outflung arm that lay in his path instead of knocking roughly against it or even stepping upon her hand in some idea of a rough joke, as many an Indian father might have done.

But Rushing Wind and Two Stars were not her father and mother. Never for an instant did little White Fawn entertain that idea. No, her own father and mother were dead. Two Stars herself had told her that, when White Fawn had first come to live with her, and when the squaw had failed, after repeated attempts, to make the little girl believe that she was their own child.

Long ago something had happened. White Fawn tried again and again to bring it back more clearly. She could remember lying at her own mother's feet and hearing her mother say, "Hush, hush! Go to sleep!" And next there was a great blackness and a sense of

being smothered. Then Two Stars held her in her arms, and rocked her gently to and fro, and hid her in a soft dark place under a big log, where at first White Fawn lay too frightened to cry and at last fell asleep.

And then began her life with this wandering Indian tribe, Two Stars hushing her cries and keeping her out of sight until she had lost her fear of these dark strangers. There were long, long journeys, first to this Indian village on the Ohio River, then into the Far West, and only recently, not two moons ago, back to the Indian village again. Wandering, always wandering!

White Fawn could dimly remember talk of an earlier journey, too, over the mountains, a long and dangerous journey. Her own father and mother had been with her then, had they not? And surely there was another little girl, with whom White Fawn had played, a merry little girl, whose brown curls blew in the wind from under a coonskin cap.

The name of this little girl had almost risen to White Fawn's lips when, playing alone one day, not a week ago, about the river bluffs near

the village, she had come upon a deep hole in the roots of an oak tree over which she had fitted a smooth flat stone.

"A cubby-hole! A hiding-place! We had one, my little brown friend and I. We kept our treasures in it," thought White Fawn, with quickly beating heart and a rosy flush upon the cheeks that usually looked so pale in contrast with the dusky Indian girls.

And every day since then she had gone to play about this secret hiding-place in which she had stored a few of her Indian playthings.

No, she might feel at home in this Indian lodge and view her surroundings with familiar eyes. Strange if it were not so after six years of Indian life.

"But I am not Indian, I am white," thought White Fawn passionately, as she strove in her little mind to bring back the forgotten past. "I am a Pale-Face, as the children here call me when they are angry. I am a Pale-Face, though I dare not say so."

The tent flap was pushed aside and Rushing Wind strode into the lodge. White Fawn listened with interest as he told of the Rain



"I AM NOT INDIAN, I AM WHITE"



Dance to be held that night, and she willingly ran out to gather sweet-grass and pungent herbs and boughs of resinous pine, in the smoke of whose fire Rushing Wind would sit, fasting to-day in order to purify himself for the sacred dance at night.

Then, free to do as she liked, she ran down to the bluff where stood the old oak tree, and, pushing through the thick screen of bushes, sat down beside the little hiding-place.

High above her head an eagle sailed through the clear blue sky.

Along the bluffs, some distance apart, stand the figures of men wrapped in their blankets, motionless, solitary. Some gaze fixedly at the sky: these are the scouts who have been detailed to watch the horizon for signs of rain. Others stand with folded arms and bent heads, perhaps engaged in prayer or deep in thought. They are safe in their solitude. They know they will not be interrupted nor molested, that their wish for privacy will be respected. Even a spy might stand fearless so.

White Fawn glanced at the men and noticed that the scout nearest her, wrapped from head

to foot in his blanket with a corner thrown across his face, was gazing intently up the river past the spot where she was sitting under the oak tree.

The little girl carelessly rolled aside the stone covering, and then uttered a gasp of astonishment. There, among her strings of beads, her ball, her unfinished doeskin bag, half laced along one side with a narrow thong, there lay a doll. There was nothing strange about this doll, carved rudely from a block of wood. Rushing Wind had made many dolls for White Fawn far prettier than this. Yet White Fawn stared at the little toy as if she could not believe her eyes. Then, snatching it up, she gazed and gazed until a look of recognition slowly dawned upon her face.

"My doll," she said slowly, "my old doll! Father whittled her out for me one night on the doorstep at home. Mother named her. She named her — Suki, — Suki? No — Sukey — Sukey! I remember, I remember! She named her Sukey, and we had a cow named Sukey, too. I remember, I remember! Oh, Mother, Mother, where are you? Mother!"

And poor little White Fawn bent over the unconscious Sukey and cried bitterly.

A moment later she had brushed away her tears and was staring intently into Sukey's expressionless face.

"I remember it all," said White Fawn in a strange, surprised voice. "My name is Sarah, Sarah Mitchell. I am not White Fawn. And my cousin I played with was named Nancy. She is the little brown girl in the coonskin cap. She made me something. A ring! A ring of sweet-grass! I was always to wear it and never forget her. Perhaps it is here! Perhaps it is here!"

With shaking fingers Sarah fumbled about the hollow until she drew forth a tiny sweet-grass ring.

"She remembers! Nancy remembers!" repeated the little girl, her lips quivering. "She will save me. Nancy will save me and take me home." And she looked longingly about her as if from the thick clump of bushes near by there might step a merry, rosy little girl whose brown curls blew out from under her coonskin cap.

But the hot sun beat down pitilessly upon the unchanged scene. The nearest Indian still stood motionless, staring up the river, and the other figures also apparently had not moved. Thoughts raced through the little girl's mind as she sat there under the tree, memory after memory crowding upon her. The Virginia home, the journey into Kentucky, her father's indecision and the Angels of his dream. The Wilderness Trail, Cumberland Gap, her aunts and uncles, her cousins, her own dear Nancy, and their beloved friend, General Adair. Her mind whirled with a myriad thoughts, but in the midst of her excitement she knew well the need for caution if she would not kill the new hope that had sprung up in her heart.

And over and over she said to herself, "My name is Sarah Mitchell. I am not White Fawn."

"Good-bye, Sukey, good-bye, my darling Sukey. I must go now, but I will come tomorrow," whispered she at last, carefully wiping away all traces of her tears. "Nancy will save me, Sukey. I don't know how, but Nancy will save me."

Hiding Sukey under a thick pile of leaves in the hollow, Sarah started homeward, lovingly twisting and turning the sweet-grass ring upon her hand.

“Two Stars will think I made it,” thought she, “and somehow, when I have it on, I feel lots nearer home and Nancy. And, at any rate, I know I am Sarah Mitchell and that I am not White Fawn.”

CHAPTER X

THROUGH THE RAIN

NEITHER Two Stars nor Rushing Wind had a thought to spare for the excited little girl that night. The Rain Dance was to be held in the largest lodge of the village, and, long before it was time to begin, Two Stars and Sarah had found their places on the side where the women had gathered, and sat there dressed in their best, expectantly waiting.

Sarah wore a dress of doeskin trimmed with long fringes and embroidered with porcupine quills. Over her shoulders, though the night was warm, was draped her robe of white deer-skin with the head and hoofs left on. Her close-fitting leggings and plain moccasins were hidden, for Sarah sat on the ground sidewise with both feet under her, as she had been taught to do. A long shining braid hung over each shoulder, her face was touched with bright red paint, and she wore a necklace of bear-claws, the gift of an old white trapper who had

recently made his rounds through the Ohio Indian villages.

If Rushing Wind and Two Stars had their minds only upon the Rain Dance that night, it must be said that Sarah's thoughts strayed off in quite a different direction. She saw the four drummers come importantly forward and seat themselves on one side of the lodge. She heard the monotonous throb of the drums, beating time ceaselessly, endlessly. The dancers entered, first four, then eight, then sixteen, and as those sixteen retired exhausted, sixteen others took their place. Some dancers represented the lightning, their bodies, their arms, the jointed sticks in their hands quivering and darting in simulated flashes. Other dancers imitated the rumbling and growling of thunder, while the drummers called up the rain-clouds with curious beckoning motions of their sticks. At times the dancers were drenched with pails of water as it was hoped the corn-fields soon might be by the rain.

But Sarah's thoughts were of a lost mother and father, of a home in Virginia that she would never see again, and of a faithful little

friend and cousin who had remembered after six years. And through all her thoughts there beat an undertone, "Nancy remembers! Nancy loves me still!"

The next morning dawned hot and clear. As soon as Sarah could slip away unnoticed, she ran down to the bluff, and, with only a glance at the solitary figures who still watched and meditated and prayed, she pushed aside, with shaking hands, the cover of her hiding-place.

A keen pair of ears, perhaps those of the near-by scout who still peered up the river, might have heard her exclamation as she gazed down upon a half-dozen droll little animals made of nuts and bits of twig.

"General Adair! He made them! He made them for Nancy and me! Oh, where are you? Do come! Come and save me! Come and take me home!"

Sarah's imploring eyes and voice would have moved a heart of stone, but there was no response to her plea, and, after whispering her new hopes in Sukey's ear and tenderly kissing each one of the little animals, she went slowly

back to the lodge where Two Stars set her to work stirring the pot of venison stew.

That afternoon Sarah again ran down to the oak tree. The little hollow had been undisturbed. The only change in the scene was the absence of the nearest scout who had gazed so steadfastly past Sarah up the river.

"I expect it was too warm for him, with his face all covered up," thought Sarah practically.

"It is hotter than ever."

She sat rocking Sukey and thinking of her mother, how, preparing for the journey over the mountains, her mother had made seed-bags and had allowed the little girl to pour in the seed. She thought of her father, of his absent-minded ways. But her mother had loved him, in spite of his oddities, and they had been so happy together, they three.

There was a low rumbling in the sky. The scouts upon the river-bank stiffened, and Sarah jumped to her feet to scan the sky. Was that a cloud, that haziness over yonder? The rumbling came again, this time louder.

"It may be a storm traveling by. That

is why the scouts don't spread the news," thought she. "Oh, I do hope it rains."

The haziness rose and spread, and presently one scout left his post and stalked solemnly away in the direction of the village.

Directly there sounded the drum of the medicine-man, a summons to the dance, a prayer that the Rain-God would not pass them by, and the scouts, together with the men of prayer, obeyed the call.

"I ought to go," thought Sarah; "it is growing dark."

The four drums of the dance broke out and Sarah rose to her feet. A sudden gust of wind blew in from the water. A dark purple cloud had apparently risen from nowhere, and Sarah hurriedly covered over her hiding-place and stamped upon the stone.

"You shan't get wet, Sukey," she murmured tenderly.

As she turned to go, she spied a hand in the near-by clump of bushes, a hand that beckoned and then parted the leaves so that a face might look through.

Sarah's heart sank. It was an Indian,

wrapped in his blanket, one corner pulled up over his head.

But the words which he called softly to her were not in the Indian tongue.

“Sarah! Sarah Mitchell!” said the Indian. “Do you know me?”

Sarah gave one searching look, a look that saw beyond the Indian dress, beneath the paint and walnut stain, and the next moment she had flung herself toward him, crying, “General Adair! My own General Adair!”

She threw both arms about his neck and the General held her close.

“Take me home! Oh, save me! Take me home!” implored Sarah.

General Adair, with her face pressed against his, nodded. “Yes, yes, that is what I have come for, child. But we must be careful. It will not do to blunder now. Night is the best time for us, when the village is asleep. Can you manage to slip out and meet me here to-night?”

There was a rumble of thunder, and a belated flight of crows, seeking shelter from the coming storm, flapped by.

"No, no," answered Sarah, clinging tightly to her friend, "let us go now. There is no one about. They are all at the Rain Dance. Hear the drums? I shan't be missed for a long, long time. They will dance and dance to call the rain, and then they will dance again to celebrate because it has come. See, there is a drop of rain now! Oh, go, go! I am so afraid something will happen and we won't get away. Oh, let us go now! Do let us go!"

The General glanced up at the dark sky. There was a sudden patter of rain among the leaves.

"You are right, Sarah," he decided quickly. "Now is the time to go. Walk beside me as if we were making for shelter. Jessy — you remember her? — is just below in that hollow."

Again pulling the blanket over his head and taking Sarah's shaking little hand in his, they walked out into the open and toward the little ravine where the roan mare was tied.

As they walked along, not too fast, not too slow, Sarah's heart pounded violently. She started at every sharp crackle of a twig, at

the rustle of a little wood creature, at a sudden drive of rain.

There was a rending glare of lightning that made Sarah jump, the thunder roared and rumbled in reply, and down came the rain in a white sheet, beating its way through the tossing branches of the trees and soaking every thirsty bush and shrub and fern. The little grasses and the drooping flowers gratefully lifted up their faces to drink in the moisture. And Sarah's heart, too, sang a song of thankfulness at the steady downpour, this friendly shower that seemed sent to help her to escape, though she and General Adair were drenched to the skin and the water ran in rivulets down Jessy's red-roan sides. The Indian drums beat on and on, rising in an ecstasy of sound that fell only to rise again.

But she did not speak one word, and only uttered a deep sigh of relief as General Adair lifted her upon the familiar back of Jessy and, leaping into the saddle, rode off into the forest.

Neither did she speak as Jessy stepped almost noiselessly through the thick forest

ways. But, as the ground became a little clearer, and the distance between them and the Indian village increased, the horse broke into a gentle gallop. Then the little girl leaned back on the General's shoulder and turned her face up to his.

"Nancy," she said, "my Cousin Nancy! Does she know that you have come to save me and to take me home?"

General Adair looked down at her with the old whimsical smile she now remembered so well.

"Nancy?" repeated General Adair. "Does Nancy know I came to save you? Why, bless you, Sarah, it was Nancy told me how to do it."

CHAPTER XI

THE BARBECUE

"SARAH MITCHELL, were you stolen by the Indians?"

"Oh, Nancy Hanks, you know I was."

"Sarah Mitchell, who saved you from the Indians and brought you home again?"

"Oh, Nancy, you know. 'Twas you and General Adair."

"You are wrong, Sarah," said Nancy in a severe tone, but with smiling face. "You never get that right. The answer to that question is — General Adair."

"But, Nancy," began Sarah earnestly, "it was you who told General Adair about the sweet-grass rings, and gave Sukey to him, and reminded him of the funny little animals made of nuts that he gave us at Holston Fort. It was seeing all them that made me remember everything and think of you and home and General Adair. If I hadn't been thinking of him and hoping he would come, I might have

called out or run away when he spoke to me, and had the Injuns down on him in a minute. They don't have strangers wandering round their camp without trouble, I can tell you."

"And there he stood on the bluff watching you every time you went down to the cubby-hole," said Nancy, smiling broadly as she thought of her dear General's clever and daring trick. "He hid the things in the hole at night and watched for you all day, didn't he? He says he knew you in a minute, though you were rigged up like a little Injun girl. Oh, my darling Sarah!" and Nancy threw both arms about her cousin's neck, "to think that you are safe home again, and that we are going to have a barbecue for you to-day! Come! There's something going on down there and we don't want to miss a thing."

It was a week ago that General Adair, riding triumphantly up the road to Beachland, had placed Sarah, trembling with excitement and delight, in her aunt's outstretched arms, while Nancy and the little boys hopped wildly about in an impromptu dance of their own and Uncle Richard stood by smiling happily at the scene.

To-day all Sarah's relatives and the neighbors from far and near had been bidden to gather at Beachland to celebrate the little girl's safe return from her six years of captivity among the Indians.

Sarah and Nancy were dressed alike in new linsey-woolsey frocks, and the moccasins upon their feet were stiff with their trimming of porcupine quills.

General Adair eyed the little girls with a smile as they stationed themselves upon the doorstep beside Aunt Lucy and Uncle Richard, ready to greet the arriving guests.

"I suppose those quills on your moccasins came from the great-grandson of the porcupine I gave you?" he said to Nancy, who shook the curls from her eyes and laughed gayly at his joke. "Did you ever tell Sarah what Jeannie's fairing was?"

"I did," said Nancy, "and I gave her the little basket to keep the first day she came home. I brought the basket here with me when I came from Red Hill, but the porcupine grew up and ran away long and long ago."

"Oh, Nancy," called Sarah, "here comes

Polly. Oh, Polly, Polly, let me see the baby! I'm home, Polly, I'm home again. Aren't you glad?"

Yes, Polly was glad, she said over and over as she hugged her cousin close, and then proudly laid her fair little baby Nanny in Sarah's arms.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Sarah, gazing tenderly down upon the little white bundle. "How fair she is! I used to love the little Indian papooses, but they were all so brown, with thick black hair."

"She is beautiful," agreed her little Aunt Nancy, with an air of modest pride, "and good, too. She is so pink and white, Sarah, like clover, I always think. See her wrinkle up her nose, just to please you, I know."

After Polly and her husband, who was named Jesse Friend, came Grandfather and Grandmother Shipley, still hearty and young in their feelings, though their hair shone white above their ruddy English faces.

Uncle Tom and Aunt Elizabeth Sparrow rode up next with Nancy Sparrow, a wiry, restless little girl, ten years old, on her own little pony, Bluebell.

"You shall have all the rides you like on Bluebell," promised Nancy Sparrow, lovingly stroking Sarah's cheek.

There was Betsy, with her husband, Levi Hall, and Nancy's other brothers, William and Charles, Tom and Joshua, with their wives, for all lived near by.

"Here comes Joe," cried Nancy, who had been watching the road with special care. "There is little Joe with him, driving. Look, Sarah! Isn't he a little tyke?"

Little Joe was only three years old. He was dressed in a brown deerskin suit and cap of mink, and at sight of his Aunt Nancy he showed all his tiny white teeth in a smile. He made a sudden spring toward her from the back of the great horse upon which he was perched before his father, but Nancy caught him safely and hugged him close.

"You are just like a little squirrel," said Nancy, with truth, as he peered about over her shoulder with his bright brown eyes. "Sarah, isn't he the cunningest little tyke you ever saw?"

With Joseph Hanks and his wife came an-

other of Nancy's cousins, Thomas Lincoln, a lad of seventeen, who was learning the carpenter's trade with Joe at Red Hill. Like Nancy and Sarah, Tom Lincoln was an orphan. His mother had been Mary Shipley, eldest of the Shipley daughters. His father, Abraham Lincoln, had been killed by the Indians when Tom was only nine years old. He was a short, thick-set fellow, with dark hair, gray eyes, and a prominent nose. He was strong, and noted as a good wrestler, and there were cries of "Lincoln! Where's Tom Lincoln?" when the company sat down under the trees to watch the sports of wrestling and of shooting that would fill the time until dinner was ready and placed upon the long tables that had been set up out of doors.

There was always a crowd about the sheep that was being barbecued whole, placed upon a frame over a deep pit in which burned a wood fire and covered with green boughs to keep the juices in. The older men were generous with suggestions and advice as to the roasting of the sheep, but presently the younger men slipped away to enter with zest

into the sports that Uncle Richard had placed in charge of Joe Hanks.

In the wrestling-matches Tom Lincoln was easily the victor. Nancy watched him with shining eyes, though it might be her own brothers whom he threw time after time in the dust. She admired both his strength and skill and the good-natured way in which the men took their defeat.

But Sarah soon tired of this rough play and was glad when the racing began. She especially enjoyed the race that Frank and Ned Berry were allowed to run. Frank was the winner, and, when Ned rather soberly settled himself at Sarah's side, she whispered consolingly in his ear and made him smile again:

"It was your legs, Ned, that made you lose the race," said Sarah. "It was not your fault at all. If they had been a little bit longer, I know you would have won."

When the shooting-matches opened, Nancy and Sarah held hands and almost forgot to breathe in their excitement. One by one the men came forward and rested their rifles on the great forked stick set up in the ground

before them. They were good marksmen, all of them, as they had need to be in their daily life. They hit the bull's-eye almost without fail. They snuffed a candle, man after man, without putting out the flame. A long nail was stuck in a tree forty paces away, and each man came up to shoot in turn, hitting the nail squarely on the head until it was completely driven into the wood.

Then dinner was ready, and they sat down to the long tables laden with venison, turkey, duck, bear's meat, and the barbecued sheep, roasted to a turn. Great loaves of bread, sweet and plain; puddings and cakes, that made the children's eyes glisten; pickles and preserved fruits that caused the women to compliment Aunt Lucy until her cheeks burned red as Nancy's own.

It was dusk before they had finished, and then they trooped into the house where, in a snug corner, with their own private bowl of refreshment close at hand, sat two fiddlers from Elizabethtown, come to play for the dancing. Back went the chairs and table against the wall, away were rolled the bear-

skin rugs, the fiddlers tuned up, and the fun was under way. Young and old, all took part. Money Musk, Old Dan Tucker, gay Scotch reels, each had a turn.

On the great bedstead in the corner lay fair Baby Nanny and little Joe Hanks, fast asleep. The fiddles whined and sang their song, the tireless arms of the gay little fiddlers working like mad.

There was an instant's lull, and Polly, glancing out of the open door, spied the moon, high in the cloudless sky.

"Oh, it's late," said Polly, beginning in a fluster to pat her hair, an old trick she had never outgrown. "We must go. Where's my baby? We won't get home till daylight now. Come, Jesse, we must go."

"One more dance!" called Uncle Richard, his face glowing with hospitality and pleasure in the fun. "Only one more dance! The Virginia Reel! Everybody take a partner for the Virginia Reel!"

Up on the floor stood Grandfather and Grandmother Shipley, leading the line.

"Sarah next," called Uncle Richard again.

"This is Sarah's barbecue. Choose your own partner, child, any one you wish."

Straight to General Adair walked Sarah.

"Because he saved me and brought me home," said she, slipping her hand in his. "And I want Nancy next me, please."

Tom Lincoln stepped forward and led Nancy into place. There they stood side by side, Tom squaring his broad shoulders, Nancy's foot impatiently tapping the floor.

What if, at that moment, Nancy Hanks could have seen into the future? Could have known that one day she and Tom Lincoln would be man and wife? That their son, Abraham Lincoln, would be President of the United States, its martyred President, and one of the great and noble spirits of the world?

Against the wall, watching the scene with tolerant eyes, stood the Reverend Jesse Head, Methodist preacher, carpenter, editor, and country judge. Already he held advanced notions as to religion and politics, but Nancy little dreamed, at that moment, that some day he would set her heart on fire for human

liberty, and that through her son a race would find its freedom.

No, Nancy's mind was on the dance, on the music, the gayety, the frolic of it all, and she watched the line forming with her deepest feeling one of gratitude for Sarah's safe return.

The line was long. It stretched from end to end of the cabin that was "twice as big as the meeting-house at Springfield," Uncle Richard and Aunt Lucy, Uncle Abraham Hanks and his wife, Uncle Tom Sparrow and Aunt Elizabeth. Frank Berry sidled up to Nancy Sparrow. Polly and Betsy paired off with their husbands, Nancy's brothers with their wives. Relatives and friends stepped into place, little Ned Berry bringing up the rear hand in hand with the Reverend Jesse Head, who joined in the last moment when he saw that disappointed Ned had no partner.

Up and down, back and forth, round and round they went, Grandfather and Grandmother Shipley stepping out the spryest of them all. Nancy drew a long sigh of regret when the fiddlers threw down their bows as a sign that they could play no more.

Uncle Richard held up his hand for silence.

"Three cheers for General Adair," he called, "who saved our Sarah from the Indians!"

The cheers were given heartily. All Sarah's kin were more than grateful to the man who had given her back to them again.

General Adair stepped forward, leading Nancy and Sarah by the hand.

"Thank you, friends," said he with a smile. "But that is only part of the story. I call for three cheers for brave Sarah Mitchell, safe at home after six years' captivity."

The cabin rang with the shouts, and bashful Sarah ran to hide her face on Aunt Lucy's shoulder.

Then General Adair's voice was heard again.

"Now three cheers for Nancy Hanks, who helped to set her cousin free!"

"Nancy! Nancy! Nancy!" The excitement rose to a high pitch. The women waved their handkerchiefs and clapped their hands. The men stamped and shouted lustily, "Nancy! Nancy! Nancy!"

Uncle Richard Berry seized Nancy and lifted her upon a chair.

“Say something!” he whispered. “Say something to them!”

Nancy’s cheeks burned, but she spoke out bravely.

“I don’t see why you all cheer for me,” said Nancy Hanks. “Of course, I wanted to save Sarah. She’s my cousin. Wouldn’t anybody want to set their kinfolk free?”

THE END

